

NEWS

Rice 'n' eas

There's a lot to like about Aussie food and cooking, and it goes well with Filipino cuisine, says Lizelda Ramirez. **VERA BERTOLA** reports.



Paella, a favourite in the Philippines and the Ramirez home

WHEN Lizelda Ramirez immigrated to Australia from the Philippines in 2004, one thing that struck the keen cook was the ease of Australian cooking.

Coming from a background of intricate recipes and long cooking processes, she loved the idea of a quick salad or steamed vegetables.

Filipino cuisine, which has evolved over several centuries, is a blend of Spanish and Asian influences which have been adapted to local ingredi-

ents and taste range from the such as fried s and rice, to the r orate paellas, w take hours to pr cook.

Rice is a stay Philippines an often have a trop with the inclus: nanas, guava, papaya and pine

Mainstay veg clude water chinese cabbage, and yard-long be A stay-at-hom



global kitchen

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does it now



Lizelda Ramirez, of Minto.

Pictures: ROBERT POZO -PP457096

Mrs Ramirez is often found in the kitchen of her Minto home, cooking up a feast for her husband and two children, aged 10 and 8. She said she previously worked in a cafe and in the kitchen of a nursing home, so she was more than comfortable whipping up creations at home.

"My cooking has a Spanish background but I love cooking different food," she said.

"I look at a recipe book and I try different things. "I'm usually not cooking

Filipino food but trying things from different countries."

While her family is used to variety, a favourite is still her paella, a traditional Spanish dish with its origins in Valencia.

Mrs Ramirez' Australian touch is a salad on the side for crunch and freshness. ■ Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative runs a healthy food for new arrivals class in Minto each Wednesday. Details: Fatin on 4627 1188.

CHICKEN PAELLA

INGREDIENTS

1kg rice, 500g chicken breasts, green and red capsicum, two cups green peas, 250g tomato paste, 1litre chicken stock, 4 onions diced, 8 cloves garlic crushed, 1 tspn sugar, 1 tspn each of paprika and tumeric, parsley, extra water, seasoning to taste.

METHOD

1. In a large pan or paella dish fry garlic, onion and spices until soft. Add 2cm sliced chicken pieces with sugar and cook until golden brown. Add tomato paste and stir.
2. Add rice and stir until well mixed.
3. Add chicken stock and some extra water, cover and steam until cooked.
4. Cooking should take two to three hours. Check regularly and add more water when needed. Add capsicum, peas and herbs about 30 minutes before finished and stir through.
5. Season with ground pepper and salt and serve.

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